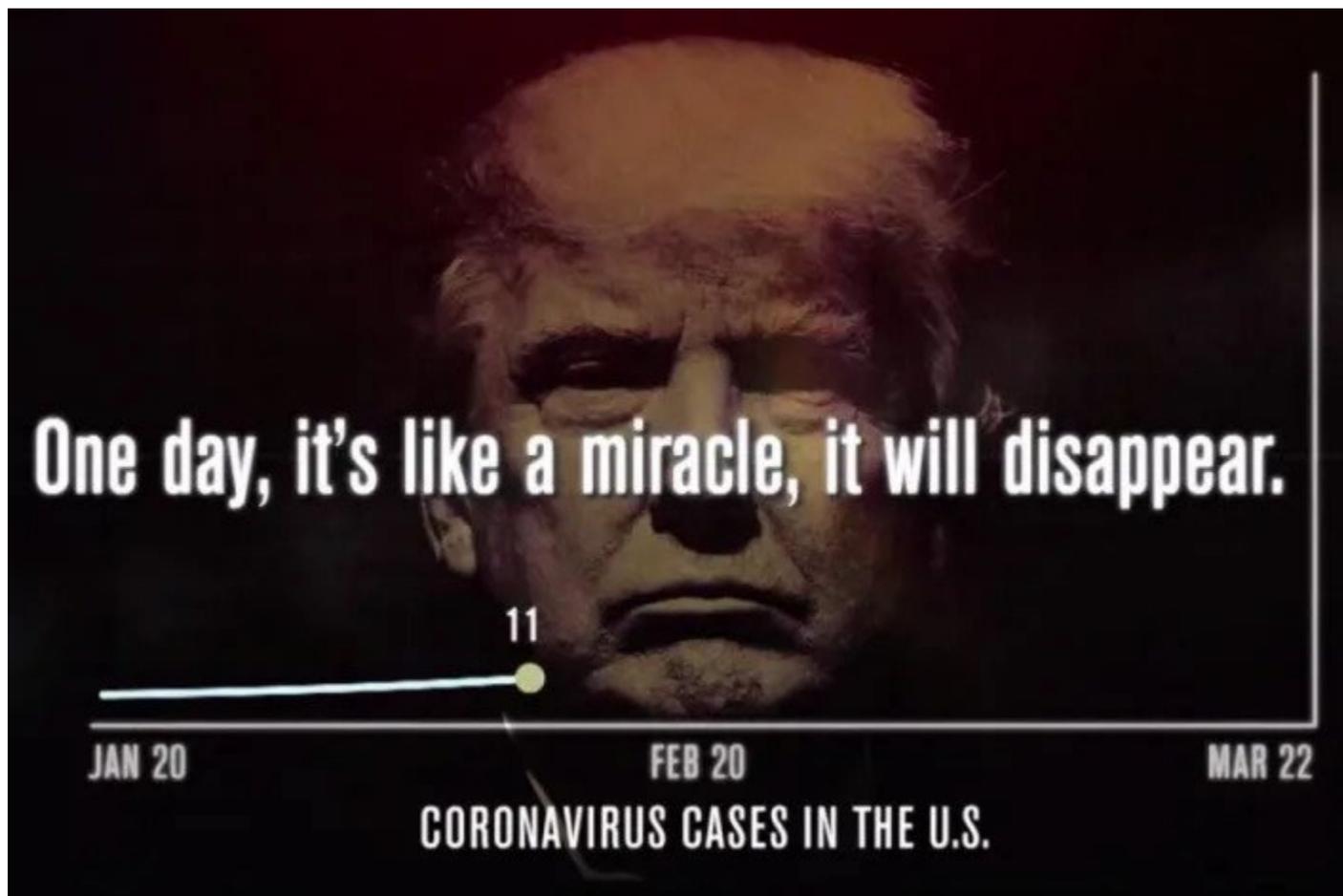


Trump campaign issues cease-and-desist letters over ad highlighting Trump's coronavirus response

Peter Weber

March 26, 2020 · 2 min read



President Trump's re-election campaign sent [cease-and-desist letters](#) to local television stations on Wednesday, threatening them with legal action and [potentially their broadcast licenses](#) if they continue to air an ad from a Democratic group, Priorities USA. The ad plays audio of Trump downplaying the COVID-19 coronavirus pandemic over a chart of the mounting number of cases in the U.S. — now at [more than 69,000](#) — but the Trump campaign [objected only to one clip](#), of Trump saying "this is their new hoax."

That quote comes from a Feb. 28 rally at which Trump repeatedly called his handling of the epidemic "one of the great jobs" and compared the Democrats "politicizing" of the coronavirus to the Russia investigation and Ukraine scandal. As [The Washington Post noted in a fact-check](#) cited by the Trump campaign, Trump said this:

They tried the impeachment hoax. That was on a perfect conversation. They tried anything ... And this is their new hoax. But you know we did something that's been pretty amazing. We have 15 people in this massive country and because of the fact that we went early, we went early, we could have had a lot more than that. [Trump, Feb. 28 rally]

Guy Cecil, who leads Priorities USA, [said on Twitter](#) that the point of the letter was "to stop this ad from airing because he doesn't want Americans to know the truth."

A super PAC supporting likely Democratic nominee Joe Biden also released an ad using Trump's "hoax" line, but gave a bit more context.

"Granted, Trump and members of his administration have played down the spread of the virus and falsely touted the strength of their response, as our numerous fact checks have pointed out," [The Washington Post noted](#). "But that does not excuse this kind of video manipulation. ... This effectively skews reality and leaves the viewer to wonder what or who related to coronavirus is, in fact, a hoax?"